
IN THE CLAIMS

1.-10. (Cancelled)

11. (Currently Amended) A method of watermarking an image, comprising:
associating digital metadata with each ~~sub-image~~ image-object of two or more ~~sub-images~~ image-objects of an image; and
encoding the digital metadata into two or more ~~sub-watermarks~~ data-layers of a digital steganographic watermark of the image, wherein ~~each sub-watermark~~ one or more selected data-layers of the two or more ~~sub-watermarks~~ data-layers encodes the digital metadata associated with a selected ~~sub-image~~ image-object of the two or more ~~sub-images~~ image-objects.
12. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 11, wherein encoding the digital metadata into two or more ~~sub-watermarks~~ data-layers of a the digital steganographic watermark of the image further comprises encoding the digital metadata into two or more ~~sub-watermarks~~ data-layers of a digital steganographic watermark of the image, wherein ~~where~~ the digital steganographic watermark is a high coding rate watermark.
13. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 11, wherein encoding the digital metadata into two or more ~~sub-watermarks~~ data-layers of a the digital watermark of the image further comprises encoding the metadata into two or more ~~sub-watermarks~~ data-layers of a the digital steganographic watermark of the image, wherein ~~the watermark contains two or more sub-watermarks~~; each sub-watermark of the two or more sub-watermarks is of a differing encoding method and/or transform.
14. (Cancelled).
15. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 11, encoding the digital metadata into two or more ~~sub-watermarks~~ data-layers of a the digital steganographic watermark of the image further comprises encoding ~~two~~ one or more data fields of digital metadata areas in at least one of the two or more ~~sub-watermarks~~ data-layers of the digital steganographic watermark.

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16. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 11, further comprising:
encoding two or more ~~sub-watermarks layers of digital-metadata~~ in a the digital
steganographic watermark in one or more image objects of the image.
17. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 11, wherein encoding the digital metadata
into two or more ~~sub-watermarks data-layers~~ of a the digital steganographic watermark of
the image further comprises encoding at least one of a manufacturer information data
field layer, an object characteristics data field layer, an order information data field layer,
and a manufacturer designated data field layer.
18. (Currently Amended) A method of digital steganographic watermarking two or more sub-
images at least one sub-image of an image, comprising:
encoding a plurality of fields layers of metadata associated with each sub-image of two or
more sub-images of an image data in a digital steganographic watermark of each sub-
image of the image at least one sub-image of an image, wherein the plurality of layers
of data are metadata associated with the at least one sub-image.
19. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 18, wherein encoding the plurality of fields of
metadata associated with each sub-image of two or more sub-images of the image layers
of data in the a digital steganographic watermark of each sub-image at least one sub-
image of the image further comprises encoding the plurality of fields of metadata
associated with each sub-image layers of data in a high coding rate digital steganographic
watermark.
20. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 18, wherein encoding the plurality of fields of
metadata associated with each sub-image of two or more sub-images of the image layers
of data in the a digital steganographic watermark of each sub-image of at least one sub-
image of the image further comprises encoding the plurality of fields of metadata
associated with each sub-image layers of data in a the digital steganographic watermark
containing a plurality of sub-watermarks of the sub-image, each sub-watermark encoded
with a different steganographic encoding method and/or transform.

21. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 20, wherein each field of metadata associated with each sub-image is layer of the plurality of layers of data are encoded into a separate digital steganographic sub-watermark.
22. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 20 ~~claim 18~~, wherein encoding the plurality of fields of metadata associated with each sub-image ~~layers of data~~ in a the digital steganographic watermark of each at least one sub-image of the image further comprises encoding one or more fields of metadata ~~data-areas~~ in each sub-watermark of the plurality of sub-watermarks ~~two or more layers of data~~ of the at least one sub-image.
23. (Currently Amended) A computer-usable medium having computer-readable instructions stored thereon for execution by a processor to perform a method comprising:
associating digital metadata with each sub-image ~~image object~~ of two or more sub-images ~~image objects~~ of an image; and
encoding the digital metadata into two or more sub-watermarks ~~data-layers~~ of a digital steganographic watermark of the image, wherein one or more selected sub-watermarks ~~data-layers~~ of the two or more sub-watermarks ~~data-layers~~ encodes the digital metadata associated with a selected sub-image ~~image object~~ of the two or more sub-images ~~image objects~~.
24. (Currently Amended) The computer-usable medium of claim 23, wherein encoding the digital metadata into two or more sub-watermarks ~~data-layers~~ of a the digital steganographic watermark of the image further comprises encoding the digital metadata associated with a selected sub-image ~~into two or more data-layers~~ of a digital steganographic watermark of each encoded in the selected sub-image ~~image object~~ of the ~~two~~ one or more sub-images ~~image object~~ of the image, where the digital metadata associated with a selected object of the one or more image objects is encoded in the digital steganographic watermark placed in the selected image object.

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25. (Currently Amended) The computer-usable medium of claim 23, wherein the two or more sub-watermarks data-layers are encoded in a high coding rate digital steganographic watermark.
26. (Currently Amended) The computer-usable medium of claim 23, wherein the digital steganographic watermark contains two or more digital steganographic sub-watermarks, each sub-watermark is of a differing steganographic encoding method and/or transform.
27. (Currently Amended) The computer-usable medium of claim 24 claim-26, wherein the metadata associated with each sub-image of the two or more sub-images is encoded in two or more sub-watermarks of the digital steganographic watermark of the sub-image each of the two or more data layers are encoded into a selected digital steganographic sub-watermark.
28. – 58. (Cancelled)